

Thomas Jefferson to George Clinton, July 6, 1807, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES J. MSS. (GEORGE CLINTON.)

Washington, July 6, '07.

Dear Sir, —I congratulate you on your safe arrival with Miss Clinton at New York, & especially on your escape from British violence. This aggression is a of character so distinct from that on the *Chesapeake*, and of so aggravated a nature, that I consider it as a very material one to be presented with that to the British Government. I pray you, therefore, to write me a letter, stating the transaction, & in such a form as that it may go to that Government. At the same time, I must request you to instruct Mr. Gelston, from me, to take the affidavits of the Captain of the revenue cutter, & of such other persons as you shall direct stating the same affair, & to be forwarded, in like manner, to our Minister in London.

You will have seen by the proclamation, the measures adopted. We act on these principles, 1. That the usage of nations requires that we shall give the offender an opportunity of making reparation & avoiding war. 2. That we should give time to our merchants to get in their property & vessels & our seamen now afloat. And 3. That the power of declaring war being with the Legislature, the executive should do nothing, necessarily committing them to decide for war in preference of non-intercourse, which will be preferred by a great many. They will be called in time to receive the answer from Great Britain, unless new occurrences should render it necessary to call them sooner.

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I salute you with friendship & respect.